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## Viewing cable 06BEIRUT2599, LEBANON: MARWAN HAMADEH DISCUSSES DRAFT RESOLUTION

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06BEIRUT2599</a>	<a href="#">2006-08-11 17:13</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Beirut</a>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 002599

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/11/2016

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SUBJECT: LEBANON: MARWAN HAMADEH DISCUSSES DRAFT RESOLUTION

Classified By: Jeffrey D. Feltman, Ambassador. Reason 1.4 (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) A/S Welch, Ambassador Feltman, Deputy Legal Adviser Jonathan Schwartz and poloff (notetaker) met with Lebanese Minister for Telecommunications Marwan Hamadeh and Minister of Displaced Naame Tomeh, both close allies of Druze leader Walid Joumblatt, at Hamadeh's downtown office on the afternoon of August 11. Understanding that the latest draft resolution would not explicitly mention Chapter VII, Hamadeh urged that the language for the mandate of the UNIFIL-plus should be as muscular as possible. While suggesting that more concrete language on the Sheba'a issue would help sell the resolution in the Lebanese Cabinet, Hamadeh understood that this would not be acceptable to Israel. Asked about a mechanism to monitor points of entry to block arms smuggling to militant groups in Lebanon, Hamadeh said this would cause disagreement within the Cabinet but that they would consider the options. Hamadeh is also concerned about the rules of engagement during the interim period between the cessation of hostilities and the deployment of the LAF/UNIFIL-plus force to the South. Hamadeh and Tomeh both suggested that Hizballah should be fully disarmed or integrated into the LAF as soon as possible. A strong voice within the Cabinet, and not easily cowed, Hamadeh promised to push for GOL acceptance of the resolution so that it can be voted on in New York. End Summary.

"WALID WANTS A TOUGH RESOLUTION"

2. (C) Using an expletive to dismiss the latest Russian suggestion of a placeholder resolution calling for a humanitarian truce, Hamedeh said that, "Walid wants a tough resolution. He doesn't want to give Hizballah a victory." He urged that the international community not hesitate to pass a resolution, and that he and others would work on convincing Speaker Berri and Hizballah to accept the draft, whatever its shortfalls in the Lebanese context. While he understands that the latest draft resolution has no explicit mention of Chapter VII for the beefed-up UNIFIL force, he supports adding language to give the force every capability to be effective in the South. Regarding the LAF deployment, Hamadeh said that Minister of Defense Elias Murr, a fence-sitter of suspected allegiance, nevertheless now seems genuinely "enthusiastic" about playing an "historic role" in leading the Lebanese army back to the South.

3. (C) According to Hamadeh's understanding, once the initial LAF/UNIFIL-plus contingents arrive in Tyre and begin deploying in the South, the Israeli withdrawal will begin. Hamadeh urged that the interim period between passage of the resolution and deployment/withdrawal be reduced as much as possible so as to avoid a breakdown in the cessation of hostilities. He is worried that as long as the IDF remain in the South, Hizballah may continue firing into Israel and certainly will continue attacking Israeli troops on the ground. The Israelis may also have an overly expansive view of what counts as defensive action, provoking more Hizballah action. An unstable situation on the ground may dissuade UNIFIL-plus troops from deploying, thus scuttling the resolutions's sequencing -- while satisfying what may be a Hizballah plan to discourage potential troop contributing nations from participating.

4. (C) Hamadeh wants there to be some sort of understanding governing hostilities during the interim period to avoid a major escalation. For instance, he suggested that civilian casualties be averted by both sides, which might encourage IDPs to begin returning to their homes. Hamadeh was initially suspicious of using the "April Understandings" rules

of engagement following the 1996 Israel-Hizballah clashes, since "this is what the Syrians and Iranians want, a low-intensity front against Israel." A/S Welch noted that the context is now different, for the April Understandings assumed that some conflict was permissible. Now, the resolution calls for a cessation of hostilities.

15. (C) Hamadeh made a half-hearted push for adding more concrete language on Sheba'a Farms, saying that this would

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help with getting Hizballah on board with the resolution, but stressed, "don't think we are eager to give them a victory on Sheba'a." Hamadeh dropped the Sheba'a issue once he understood this is a deal-breaker for the Israelis and that at least the territory is mentioned in the current draft. He added that, "The people of Lebanon want a ceasefire and withdrawal. They don't care about Sheba'a."

15. (C/NF) Regarding the GOL desire for a lifting of the blockade of ports and airports, A/S Welch and Ambassador Feltman stressed that the Israelis would have to be confident there is effective monitoring in place at points of entry to block arms resupply of militant groups. Hamadeh said that neither Berri nor Hizballah support having UNIFIL assume this responsibility. A/S Welch and Ambassador Feltman suggested that perhaps other governments or private security firms could help the GOL with the task of monitoring entry points. Concerned that this would place PM Siniora in an awkward position, since it "would give the feeling that we are being placed under mandate," Hamadeh said that the GOL would look into such options, but that it would have to be handled delicately. "It's not something that we can write down." Oddly, since it would be unlikely to win Cabinet approval, Hamadeh and Tomeh suggested putting up an electrified "intelligent fence" at points along the border with Syria.

DEALING WITH HIZBALLAH  
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16. (C) Even if the deployment/withdrawal plan were to work, Hamadeh worried, "what then happens north of the Litani?" An armed Hizballah would still be capable of launching rockets over the heads of the LAF and UNIFIL-plus into Israel. Hamadeh and Tomeh said that they are ready to push for the full disarmament of Hizballah, and that Lebanese public opinion would help them in this. "As soon as the guns quiten, voices will rise." After an initial ebullient phase during which Hizballah will claim victory for "the resistance", there would come a "painful time of accounting of assets and liabilities." Hamadeh claimed that even some Shi'a, returning to their homes in the South to find these reduced to rubble, would point an angry finger at Hizballah. Speaking of Hizballah, Tomeh urged that "we have to wear them down."

COMMENT  
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17. (C) A stalwart voice in the Cabinet, we expect that Hamadeh will be able to push for rapid GOL acceptance of the latest draft resolution. He indicated that, while it remains a tough sell, the dropping of the explicit references to Chapter VII would help in convincing other Cabinet members to accept the Shebaa language. He seems less optimistic on the issue of monitoring of points of entry, saying he does not want PM Siniora discredited by those who would accuse him of selling out Lebanese sovereignty.

18. (U) A/S Welch did not have the opportunity to clear this cable.  
FELTMAN